

VZCZCXRO6075
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHRL #1270/01 1771448
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 261448Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8646
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHDIR/IRAN RPO DUBAI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 001270

SIPDIS

SIPDIS, STATE FOR NEA/IR, NEA/IDP, EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [GM](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: GERMAN MFA OUTLINES IRAN PROGRAMMING WITH VISITING
NEA SENIOR ADVISOR DAVID DENEHY

BERLIN 00001270 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor John Bauman for reasons 1.4
(b)/(d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During a May 15 meeting with NEA Senior Advisor David Denehy, MFA Office Director for Middle East Affairs Sabine Sparwasser discussed the MFA's assessment of the Iranian government's paranoia about efforts to support civil society. Denehy explained IDP's goals and approach to working with NGOs, and discussed a project currently underway with a German organization. Sparwasser called for increased information sharing, suggesting that the German ambassador to Iran conduct briefings for Department officials. She also outlined German efforts in supporting Iranian civil society, noting the German preference to work on seemingly apolitical projects that have a political undercurrent, while also aiming for mid-term results. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) IRANIAN GOVERNMENT PARANOID ABOUT POLITICAL STABILITY, CRACKDOWN UNDERWAY: Sparwasser noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) 's focus on regime stability has driven it to view support for civil society as immediately equaling support for regime change, adding that perhaps Germany and the U.S. should take care not to feed into such paranoia. The MFA's current assessment is that the IRI has become more repressive and is now clearly carrying out a clampdown. Sparwasser asked if it is possible in such an atmosphere to carry out events even partially funded by the USG.

¶3. (C) DENEHY OUTLINES IDP EFFORTS: After outlining how IDP works with global NGOs to implement programs on the ground in Iran, Denehy noted that evidence does not indicate an increased level of arrests from its already very high level, but greater rhetoric from the regime. Despite this increased vitriolic rhetoric, noted Denehy, there has been no reticence from applicants and that IDP has received over 100 applications for its programs. Denehy also indicated that the USG had protections in place within this project to protect program participants. Denehy informed Sparwasser that a Germany-based organization had recently been awarded an IDP grant. He also explained the goals and structure of the small grants program currently in planning. Sparwasser appeared aware of the grant to the German organization and expressed no concerns with the involvement of German organizations in either program.

¶4. (C) STRONG GERMAN TIES IN IRAN OFFER CHANCE FOR MORE INFORMATION SHARING: Sparwasser noted that Germany has an advantage in its long presence and experience in Iran,

calling Iran "one of Germany's most complex relationships." Sparwasser discussed improving information exchange between Germany and the U.S. to help the USG understand Iran better. One option would be for the German ambassador to Tehran regularly travel to and brief IRPO Dubai and to brief Department officials as appropriate. She added that Germany's room to maneuver in Iran has decreased as a result of EU-3 efforts and that contact with Iranian civil society has become much more difficult.

¶5. (C) GERMAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS TARGET POLITICAL ISSUES INDIRECTLY: According to Sparwasser, pressing issues in public plays into the IRI's fear of regime change; the Iranian public is also suspicious of the West's intentions. "Whatever we do in public diplomacy will be medium term and we need to conduct confidence building. We should show what our values are and what we stand for," she said. She described the German preference to "fly under the radar" and seek opportunities for engagement via seemingly apolitical projects that have underlying political messages. Sparwasser cited the example of the success of two German films at Iranian film festivals as an indirect means of influencing Iranian public opinion. Both films dealt directly with state repression in the Nazi and Communist eras; despite their subject matter, both films were shown and won awards at major Iranian film festivals. The German government also sponsors projects in Bam, where they conduct girl's education and reconstruction projects. The MFA has also received IRI support for a project aimed at educating Afghani refugee children as part of their preparation for repatriation. The MFA has also supported an EU Seminar to educate Iranians on how the EU functions. Such projects are carried out with modest sums of money. While Germany had been the object of suspicion among Iranians, its role has become constructive through regional cooperation and dialogue with Iran. Earlier meetings with

BERLIN 00001270 002.2 OF 002

other German non-governmental organizations (SEPTTEL) illustrated a number of other activities that the Germans were also conducting, to include working with labor unions and other civil society organizations. However, the recent arrest of Hossein Mousavian, Iran's former deputy nuclear negotiator and a former ambassador to Germany, seemed to put a damper on prospects for the future with some organizations.

¶6. (C) NEED TO IMPROVE BROADCASTING EFFORTS THROUGHOUT REGION: Sparwasser also called for increasing the flow of information and broadcasts to the Iranian people, asking if the USG had considered also funding broadcasters not affiliated with the USG. Denehy noted that up to now, such an endeavor has been difficult due to independent broadcasters' pre-existing political agendas and their inability until now to demonstrate a true impact on Iranian public opinion. Sparwasser noted that the West as a whole has difficulty putting across its message in the Middle East and added that it is important to position as much content as possible in the mass media. Sparwasser suggested including the Office Director for Middle East Communications in future meetings.

¶7. (U) This message has been cleared by David Denehy.
TIMKEN JR